



Minutes Tempe Streetcar Community Working Group May 23, 2011

Meeting of the Tempe Streetcar Community Working Group was held on May 23, 2011, 5:00 PM at the Don Cassano Community Room of the Tempe Transportation Center, 117 E 5th St., Tempe, Arizona.

Members Present:

Shana Ellis, Chair
Mark Yslas
Mike Wasko
Janie Shelton
Paul Kent
Steve Tyree
Rebecka Johnson
Cheryl Hornyman
Nancy Hormann
Lisa Roach
Charles Lee
Charles Huellmantel
Mary Ann Miller
Dale Larson
Margaret Hunnicutt
Michael DiDomenico
David Strang
Sam Wheeler
Bob Gasser

Members Absent:

Manjula Vaz
Frank Granillo
Chuck Newkirk
Stephanie Nowack
Karyn Gitlis

METRO Staff & Consultants Present:

Marc Soronson
Ben Limmer
Carla Kahn
Howard Steere
Tad Savinar
Angela Dye
Deron Lozano
Lisa Procknow
John Farry

City Staff Present:

Jyme Sue McLaren
Nancy Ryan
Shauna Warner
Charlie Meyer
Shelly Seyler
Bonnie Richardson
William Kersbergen
Cathy Hollow
Greg Jordan

Shana Ellis called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

Chairperson Ellis welcomed the members to the meeting and asked that the Tempe Streetcar Community Working Group (CWG) members, staff and audience members to introduce themselves.

Agenda Item 2 – Approval of Minutes from April 25, 2011

Chairperson Ellis called for the review and approval of CWG minutes from April 25, 2011. Two corrections were offered by the members. Sam Wheeler made the motion to approve the minutes with the corrections noted and David Strang seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Agenda Item 3 – Public Appearances

There were no requests to speak during the public appearances.

Agenda Item 4 – Input from Major Stakeholders along the Alignment on Future Visions Related to Streetcar System

Chairperson Ellis turned the agenda item over to Nancy Ryan for introductions. Nancy Ryan explained that four stakeholders along the streetcar alignment were identified by the Tempe Streetcar Community Working group (CWG) to identify the opportunities and challenges for their companies or organizations from the streetcar project. The stakeholders are

- Tempe High School, represented by Mark Yslas;
- Arizona State University (ASU), represented by Neil Calfee;
- Downtown Tempe Community (DTC), represented by Nancy Hormann; and
- Tempe St. Luke's Hospital, represented by Dale Larson

Mark Yslas noted an opportunity for Tempe High relates to the fact that Tempe High is the only school in the District that has an International Baccalaureate, Health Occupations Preparatory Education, AVID and JAG – Jobs for Arizona Graduates programs. So these unique programs combined with the unique and cool way for students to get to Tempe High presents a great opportunity to recruit students from all over the Valley because of the streetcar connection with light rail. Increasing enrollment brings dollars to the school and to the District, and in these times we are recruiting all the students that we can. Mark added that, the streetcar in front of Tempe High School will be a unique cool thing that draws some of the city kids, and we will market it with something like – Hop on the streetcar to get to Tempe High. Mark said that Tempe High has been around over 100 years and has come full circle with downtown Tempe. Mark said they consider themselves the school for the Mill Avenue District and downtown Tempe, as the original campus used to be at University and Mill until the 1950's. From the historical perspective the city grew around the old high school and now it will be reconnected to downtown with a new mode of transportation. Mark shared that he had an interest to have the stop named around Tempe High school for some things that are significant for the 100-year history of Tempe High; such as the first female to have graduated at Tempe High, the first minority student or naming something of significance in the history of Tempe High.

Mark Yslas continued that the construction adjacent to the school is a concern for how it could impact buildings, the employees, students, and busses coming to and from campus. Mark said

details on where students drive and where parents drop off their children will need to be worked through between the Transportation Director at the District, Tempe and METRO. Mark added that Tempe High is a GO GREEN school in cooperation with the ASU School of Sustainability that could allow them to expand the green program relationships or build new ones as it relates to the streetcar, Tempe High and ASU.

Mike Wasko asked if there was a preference on the location of the stop by Tempe High to be south or north of Broadway. Mark Yslas noted that the bus currently stops on Broadway west of Mill and on Mill north of Broadway, so there are two stops close to Tempe High. Mark Yslas continued saying whether the streetcar stops north of Broadway or south of Broadway, the kids are used to getting across the intersection. Mike noted that he recalled a discussion of the complication of being right in front of Tempe High School because of the right turn lane for vehicles, and the streetcar might need to go south of Broadway by the Walgreens. Mark noted that location was fine because the High School has a good relationship with Walgreens.

Neil Calfee questioned whether the CWG was interested in what ASU was going to do with the corner of University and Mill or more than that. Jyme Sue McLaren said that it would helpful to know any land planning that might influence the streetcar project. Neil noted that at the Mill and University site has experienced sporadic starts as a project; the intent is to do what is right for that site, and move forward. Neil noted that some buildings that have been demolished, parking provided as a temporary land bank and the buildings on the south edge are used for University purposes. Neil added that ASU has studied breaking the site into commercial development and institutional development; roughly 50%-50% or two thirds-one third split of commercial to industrial. He continued saying ASU will not be mixing the commercial and institutional uses together, which was the difficulty in the past. Neil said the current discussions focus on two proposals that look at a hotel and conference facility at the corner of the site (Mill & University) with 300 room hotel and conference facility behind. Neil added that ASU is in general discussion with Tempe about the project, as ASU cannot go it alone to make it a feasible project, so economic analysis is underway and working with city staff to understand what might be done in partnership to create such a facility. The intent would be to upsize the conference center to require more hotel rooms than the adjacent hotel would provide on-site, and would drive business to the other Tempe hotels and restaurants. He said the intent on that site is to move all the conventioners onto Mill Avenue when they are done for the day, which would add energy to Mill Avenue. Neil added that ASU has an interest in a conference facility to support all the conferences that the University produces and holds all over the Valley so ASU would like to bring those meetings/conferences home to Tempe on this site and fill it half of the time or more with its own conferences. Neil felt that hotel and convention foot traffic is not necessarily facilitated by the streetcar. Neil noted that the balance of the site is proposed to be institutional with three to four acres for expansion of the fine arts program art studios, ceramics program space and arts-related high-bay space and it could include the studios with kilns, welding or neon labs which are the thriving part of our arts program. Neil noted the opportunity to make it open to the public as an attraction. Neil added that ASU is also looking whether to include a student housing tower at that site. He said looking further south of that site, ASU does not foresee any changes to the south along the ASU boundary.

Neil Calfee noted that within the Mill Avenue District there are other things the university is doing such as marketing the old Border's space at the Brickyard. Neil said it's configured oddly,

but they are willing to work with a tenant to keep the ground floor commercial. Neil noted that the remainder of the site will remain as the Engineering School. Neil said that ASU bought a building across the street at Centerpoint (pointing to the office at 7th and Maple) for research, maybe some lab and administrative space.

David Strang asked what the timing of the University and Mill property development might be. Neil Calfee said that there is no date or timing for moving forward and will depend on the market so ASU will not move forward until they are sure they have a feasible project.

Sam Wheeler asked if there was any impact to the future of the proposed ASU Stadium District from the streetcar. Neil Calfee replied that in its current location it has no impact, but that in the future with the planned improvement of the Stadium District, a streetcar belongs on Rio Salado Parkway because of the planned development.

Marc Soronson asked about ASU's thoughts on what can be done in the interim about the pedestrian environment along the east side of Mill from Gammage to University Drive. Neil Calfee responded that ASU is looking at potential project like the landscaping recently completed on the north boundary of that site, but that probably would be the extent of it. Tad Savinar asked if the landscaping would be in advance of the hotel. Neil replied that it would be before the hotel, but there is no immediate project to make that change.

Nancy Hormann addressed the CWG by saying that the DTC Board of Directors is very supportive of the streetcar and that it is very excited about it coming. Nancy said that what she wants to share with the CWG is that she polled every merchant along the east side of Mill Avenue about what the streetcar meant to them. Nancy said DTC received a lot of positive feedback about being able to make the connection from the restaurants to Gammage making it possible to park in downtown, eat dinner and ride the streetcar to Gammage. Nancy noted that DTC has a great promotion with Gammage to eat in downtown and go to the show, but the transportation aspect of it does not work quite right. They eat in downtown and drive to Gammage now.

Nancy Hormann continued that the merchants' greatest concern was the perception of parking by the public, and they wanted everyone to know that they did not want to lose the parking on Mill Avenue on the east side of the street. She noted that another DTC issue was loss of sidewalk space to the streetcar at stations, because the stations (on the curb lane alternative) would take up part of the sidewalk. Nancy added that the last concern was what will happen during construction. She said that she shared with the Board that it will not be as extensive or prohibitive as was with the light rail. Nancy summarized by saying that the big concern is about losing the parking and loading zones on the street. She added that if the shared through lane alternative was selected you would probably get 100 percent support from the merchants, and if the parking was taken away, you would probably get 100 percent dissention along Mill Ave.

Chairperson Ellis asked Nancy Hormann if the information she gathered could be turned over to the CWG. Nancy Hormann noted that her poll was meeting individually with each of the business owners or managers along the east side of Mill Avenue and that it took nearly two months to meet with each owner/manager. Nancy said she could go back and do it in a survey form if it's wanted. Chairperson Ellis noted that if Nancy had that hard data to share she wanted

to make sure the persons (businesses) affected will continue to be advocates and that they have all the correct information. Nancy said there is a big lack of information for the merchants because nobody has talked about the construction effect so in their minds they think the street will be ripped up for a very long time and that will be a big part of information that needs to be shared.

Charles Huellmantel shared that he had a conversation with Julian Wright who owns a number of restaurants along Mill Avenue. Charles continued to say that Julian sent a letter and took the position that LaBocca (on the east side of Mill) would be better off with more sidewalk space, a single lane of travel and no parking on the street as long as the streetcar shared the through lane and he got more sidewalk space back in front of his restaurant. Charles said Julian thought that would be a much better than any other solution.

MaryAnn Miller asked for clarification from Charles Huellmantel that he was saying to keep one lane of traffic (with the streetcar), get rid of the parking and turn that into patio space. Charles replied that the sidewalk would widen to become streetcar stop space and patio space, and he continued that Julian's restaurants are highly dependent on patio space. Nancy Hormann added that she believed that METRO had told the CWG that there was no money available to widen the sidewalks (along Mill Avenue), so that was not conveyed to the businesses as an option.

Chairperson Ellis noted that was correct as far as the streetcar project. Ben Limmer (of METRO) agreed. Jyme Sue McLaren noted that if Tempe chose to do a streetscape project that would widen the sidewalks or pull out the curbs that would be considered a betterment and Tempe would have to identify the funding resources for that because it would be outside funding that is currently budgeted for this project. Chairperson Ellis noted that it is an option that would need to be a separate project, but Council has always talked about a strategy for how downtown will look. She said if Council goes forward with these steps and gets confirmation on funding for the streetcar, then Council can talk about other improvements that we need to make. Neil Calfee added that if the alignment takes out the parking and puts the streetcar down that lane, you could not widen the sidewalks and it would eliminate that option for the foreseeable future. Jyme Sue McLaren noted that the relevance of the stop locations also needs that same consideration; depending on the stop location, the bulb out could work or you could relocate the stop.

Dale Larson of Tempe St Luke's Hospital noted that from the hospital standpoint, the only negative impact with the streetcar is where the stops are located and whether the hospital can make use of the system or not. Dale said St Luke's is a land-locked site and will not expand out any further, so that limits what can be done within the site itself. Dale continued saying that the cafeteria is rather small, so the streetcar give the benefits of allowing families (visiting the hospital) the opportunity to go downtown to enjoy Mill Avenue restaurants and still come back to the hospital. Dale added that Tempe St Luke's is a joint venture with Phoenix St. Luke's and Tempe St. Luke's with shared service, for example cardiac services are not done at Tempe, so the streetcar and the ability to interface with light rail gives us better options of how to get families back and forth. He said Tempe St Luke's has an extremely busy emergency room and in the foreseeable future that is one service that will expand, so if patients are transferred from Tempe to Phoenix for higher care this would be an option to get families to that hospital in

downtown Phoenix without the need to drive. Dale stated that there is a Medical Office Building next to the hospital for physicians' services that draws from all over Phoenix, Mesa and Chandler, so if we can get the patients to access the light rail, then they could use the streetcar to get to those medical offices.

David Strang asked if they take the streetcar to light rail for the Phoenix St Luke's Hospital, is there a connection from the light rail to the hospital. Dale Larson replied, that it would be a short shuttle bus ride from the light rail station, and that is something they would consider especially for those types of trips. Jyme Sue McLaren noted that there is a bus connection that could do that also, but might be a three vehicle trip. Chairperson Ellis asked if noise was a concern for the hospital. Dale replied that he did not believe so as the hospital already has (freight) train tracks behind it.

Chairman Ellis asked if there were any other questions for these stakeholders. She then asked the CWG if there were any other stakeholders that they wanted to hear from, noting that could be part of the future agenda item discussion.

A committee member asked how many businesses are along the east side of Mill (in downtown). Nancy Hormann responded about 25 businesses.

Agenda Item 5 – Track and Stop Location Pros/Cons Presentation

Chairperson Ellis turned the discussion over to Marc Soronson.

Marc Soronson said that today's discussion is to share the pros and cons about the track and stop locations, based on comments received from the CWG reacting to the initial ideas about potential stop locations and track locations. Marc said METRO received a lot of comments from this group, the staff and others; about 200 comments were compiled into a matrix and then reduced down into a list that made sense to review. Marc noted that METRO has prepared drawings of a block in downtown to illustrate the issues for track location and stops, which is the block from 6th to 5th streets. He described the businesses on that block, referred to the drawing and reminded the group that for the existing condition there is:

- Parking and loading at the curb
- Bike lane left of parking
- Travel lane

For the curb lane operation:

- Assume that we have the bike lane to the right of the track, behind the streetcar platform
- The platform (streetcar stop) extends about five feet to meet the streetcar, which pinches the existing bike lane, so the bike lane moves behind the platform
- Typically nine feet of sidewalk will be left between the building and the bike lane

For the shared lane operation:

- Keeps the parking on the street
- Bike lane could be on right or left of parking strip, but would still need to be routed behind the platform
- Some parking and loading remains except for the streetcar stops

Marc Soronson noted that there are exceptions for discussion tonight at particular stops where utilities and technical operation affect the final location of the track location and stops at these exception areas, such as Rio Salado Parkway/Mill, University from Ash to Mill and from 13th Street to University. Marc said METRO will have the engineers look at the details of these areas and come back once we understand where the stop and track alignment is (on either end of the intersection). Marc continued, saying the discussion was not going to get into whether the project will pay for widening sidewalks, but could look at whether the track location would preclude the ability to widen sidewalks in the future. Marc added that METRO has emphasized throughout the CWG review of the importance of having an affordable project to build.

Marc described the original thoughts for the location of stops, reflected by the stop criteria.

- Activity centers to be served
- Economic development opportunities
- Safety and security of operations
- Pedestrian access getting riders to the station
- Stop spacing to move trains as efficient as possible
- Traffic signals and integration
- Cost
- Bus connections
- Sidewalk and property impacts
- Environmental issues – noise and vibration and other issues evaluated with the Environmental Assessment (EA)

Marc continued through the PowerPoint slides that identify the pros and cons of the track location from Southern to 13th Street, first for the right lane running:

Pros

- Easy passenger access
- Cost – ability to utilize existing bus facilities
- Traffic operations keeping bus and streetcar in one lane
- Bus route connections

Cons

- Sidewalk and property impacts
- Possible utility impacts
- Bike lane designs

Marc showed the pros and cons for the left lane running (with stops in the center of the street):

Pros

- Cost – one center stop vs. two side stops
- Minimize sidewalk and property impacts

Cons

- Possible utility impacts
- Pedestrian access to stops
- Traffic operations could place transit vehicles in both lanes
- Prevents staggered stops

Marc identified the pros and cons of the track location on Mill from University to Rio Salado Parkway for the curb lane running:

Pros

- Schedule reliability
- Minor improvements to traffic operations

- Removes transit from through travel lane
- Greater flexibility for special events

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| <p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sidewalk impacts (loss of pedestrian space) at stops• Loss of east side parking (30 spots) and loading zones (6) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All red signal phase at Rio Salado/Mill• Inability to widen sidewalks |
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Marc Soronson discussed the possibility to reduce the depth of the platform from 8 feet to 7 feet in order to retain some of the pedestrian sidewalk, but that would preclude being able to place a shelter and still meet ADA clearances. Marc added that last month a question was raised whether in the downtown if shelters are needed at every stop. Marc identified the pros and cons of the track location on Mill for the shared through lane running:

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| <p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fits existing streetscape• Maintains about 75% of on-street parking and loading zones• Reserves existing sidewalks• Less construction impacts• Costs | <p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor traffic impact• Accessibility to stop modified for ADA• Streetcar travel time |
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Marc Soronson continued the discussion about the Ash Avenue by noting that Ash has 57 feet width north of 5th Street and 54 feet width south of 5th Street. Marc described the Ash Avenue area pros and cons on Ash with the curbside running:

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| <p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule reliability• Minor improvement to traffic operation• Greater flexibility with special events | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sidewalk impacts at stops• Loss of all west and east side on street parking (35 spots)• Traffic operations impact• All red signal phase at University & Ash |
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Cons

Marc described the Ash Avenue area with shared through lane running:

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| <p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fits within existing streetscape• Preserved existing sidewalks• Less construction impact• Ability to add on-street parking south of 5th Street (12 to 17 spots) | <p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor traffic impact• Ability to stop• Streetcar travel time• Loss of east side on street parking (3 to 7 spots)• Challenge to operate 2-way during special events |
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Marc Soronson moved the discussion onto the stop locations by showing a comparison between the original concept, CWG comments received and the current stop findings. Marc added that for the stops between Southern and Broadway, the comments received from CWG suggested shifting or adding stops more frequently between Southern and Broadway. The current findings for stop locations in this area are at:

- Southern

- Del Rio
- Broadmor
- Broadway

Mary Ann Miller asked if there is a light at Alameda, but not one at Broadmor, how would one access the stop at Broadmor. Jyme Sue McLaren explained that although there is not a signal to cross at Broadmor, that one would be added by the streetcar project.

Marc Soronson continued with the stop locations from 13th Street to Rio Salado Parkway including those on Mill and Ash Avenues. Marc noted that the stops again were adjusted from comments received by the CWG to show stop locations in this area at:

- 13th Street (somewhere between St Luke's Hospital and 13th Street)
- 11th Street
- University (subject to refinement of technical issues)
- Midblock between 5th and 6th
- 3rd Street
- At Rio Salado Parkway (subject to refinement of technical issues)

Nancy Hormann asked if METRO was going to reevaluate a station at the corner Mill and Rio Salado Parkway. Marc noted that if there is a station close to the intersection at Rio Salado Parkway a new signal phase is needed in all cases. Marc said when the stop was located closer to 3rd Street the shared through lane option could transition the streetcar to the left turn pocket and avoid that extra cycle. Marc said another question was about the distance from Rio Salado Parkway. Marc shared that the Technical Team felt it was important to have a stop at 3rd and Ash for access and visibility to light rail, so there is no station shown on Rio Salado Parkway. Marc shared that one previous CWG comment was that we should have a stop there for the flood of pedestrians after an event, but we can talk more about that tonight.

Marc Soronson continued to identify the findings of the southbound stop locations on Ash at:

- Ash just south of Rio Salado Parkway
- 5th Street
- Ash at University

Marc noted that summary of findings for the stop:

- Maintain the same number of stops
- Stop spacing was adjusted, still have good distance between stops
- Access to activity centers
- Preservation of parking as much as we could with the possibility of 5th Street could be restriped to provide angled parking in all cases and the ability to preserve parking on Ash
- Maintains traffic flow
- Stops at locations to maximize development opportunities

Marc Soronson solicited track location comments. A CWG member asked to show the cartoon (cross-section) for the track location along Mill.

Cheryl Hornyman said that she would rather have the right lane running between Southern and 13th to be able to get around a streetcar or bus when it's stopped in the right lane.

Paul Kent asked if the current bus stops on Mill Avenue are at all pull outs. Greg Jordan confirmed that the pull outs for bus are only at the arterial locations (Broadway and University).

Nancy Hormann asked if the busses and streetcar will share the same stops. Marc Soronson said that they would not share the pullouts, but the streetcar and bus could share locations where there is not a pull out. There would be a reconstruction at bus/street car stop to increase the curb for the streetcar.

A CWG member asked if the left lane running of streetcar would interfere with the left turn pocket. Marc Soronson said that depending on the stop location it could.

Steve Tyree noted that in previous CWG conversations the neighborhood's children and people in wheelchairs should not need to wait in the middle of the street for the streetcar, so we like the right lane running.

Marc Soronson moved the discussion to the track location on Mill. He reviewed the differences between curb lane operation and through shared lane operation.

David Strang asked why minor traffic impact was a con for the shared through lane operation. Marc Soronson noted that based on the traffic analysis there is only a minor impact more than with the curbside operation.

Paul Kent noted that he has changed his opinion to support the shared through lane operation over the curbside operation, but that he has concerns about the treatment of the bikes going behind the stops. He continued saying, he would consider lowering the speed limit and have the bikes go with the traffic, as it seems messy to have them go behind, have a special lane and get people out to the platform. Paul noted that the Mill Avenue section from University to Rio Salado, he thought there shouldn't be any bus shelters other than some small pole. Paul said that the stop at 3rd Street should be put north of the tracks. Paul suggested that the streetcar platform would not be obvious, that the pavers as they are with no difference in concrete or textures and a little sign for the stop. Jyme Sue McLaren noted that there are ADA compliance issues such as warning strips and devices for people with low vision, so using pavers is probably very unlikely although the aesthetic character can be part of the urban design guidelines that Tad Savinar is preparing that can contribute or accentuate the urban environment. Tad Savinar noted the need to create a seamless environment whether it's paving or how the platforms work at the stops. Tad agreed that the goal is to have as large of a sidewalk as possible to allow café dining, ADA access, people waiting for transit and in a safely controlled environment. Marc Soronson noted the vehicle selected will make a difference in the design of the platform, so the closer the doors are for ADA loading, the shorter the platform can be. Paul responded that it is the bike lane that creates the issue, so without the bike lane the rebuild of the sidewalk would not need the same kind of ramps (as with the bike lane included). Tad Savinar shared that there would be a four inch height difference above the curb for the street car loading.

Chairperson Ellis asked on Mill the bike lane is shown on the right of the streetcar and on the slide for Ash Avenue the bike lane is on the left. Marc Soronson responded that the bike lane on Ash could be either left or right of parked cars. Chairperson Ellis suggested that the bike lane locations be consistent.

David Strang asked if these decisions drive the design of the streetcar vehicle or the vehicle drives the design. Marc Soronson responded that it is a little bit of both, but the stop location and the track location have nothing to do with the vehicle to be selected. He continued the length of the stop is related to the vehicle to be selected, so if METRO writes a specification for the needed platform length, then only manufacturers that meet that specification should respond.

Mary Ann Miller said that she supports keeping the parking and using the shared through lane for the streetcar, and it's the most flexible alternative down the line.

Charles Huellmantel said that that being able to get out of the streetcar at the sidewalk is important as opposed to the center of the street along Mill. He added that having the wider sidewalk and slower traffic is helpful. Charles said the stop south of Mill Avenue near Rio Salado Parkway would be both closer to residents and the entrance to the park. He said the project team has done a good job in the downtown of re-aligning those stops.

Nancy Hormann said that if you took the 3rd Street stop and moved it to the north side of 3rd then you do not need the stop at Rio Salado Parkway. Nancy emphasized the need to keep the stop on Mill rather than Rio Salado Parkway.

Marc Soronson asked the CWG about the stop location at Ash and Rio Salado Parkway, which was placed based on the comment about serving the neighborhood to the west. Marc asked if the Ash Ave stop near 3rd should be closer to Rio Salado Parkway or at 3rd Street. Charles Huellmantel suggested that stops on 3rd & Ash and 3rd & Mill are good because it allows both the east and west (light rail) traffic to use it and that over time streetcar users will know the stop. He said that you bring the stops closer to Rio Salado Parkway so people on Rio Salado can get to them easier, presumably there will be more pedestrian traffic flow on Rio Salado Parkway over time. Cheryl Hornyman said that she walks to downtown Tempe (from Hayden Ferry Lakeside) all the time until it hits 100 degrees, and then she does not walk but drives to downtown. Cheryl continued with, if you want residents to ride the streetcar the time to ride is in the summer, and they will not walk to 3rd Street to catch the streetcar. She said a stop closer to Rio Salado is needed or residents will not ride it down to downtown or to Gammage. Mary Ann Miller asked when it's really hot, would you still walk to Mill and Rio Salado Parkway. Cheryl replied that she can see walking to Mill and Rio Salado but not all the way to 3rd Street. Charles noted that it's currently a vacant block and not a pleasant place to walk. Cheryl responded that the best time for riding the streetcar for those living along Rio Salado is during the hot weather, because during good weather everyone walks to downtown. Jyme Sue McLaren noted that while this is the initial line, in the future, additions to the line could extend to the north or down Rio Salado. Nancy Hormann said, in that case the stop at 3rd and Ash stop makes sense and not on Rio Salado Parkway but the four stops down Ash.

Mike Wasko said the stops at Mill and Rio Salado on the Mill Avenue side and at Rio Salado and Ash on the Ash side are good because when you run the streetcar on special events, it runs to the end of the line. Mike noted that in the base case there were eight stops shown in downtown, and now you show seven, you may have monies to move the stop on Ash.

Lisa Roach said that one of the selling points of this project was to connect to neighborhoods, and I like the stop at 3rd and Rio Salado and those on Ash because of the neighborhoods to the west.

Mike Wasko asked about the curb lane option, the bike lane is shown inside the curb lane as well as the through shared lane. Marc Soronson responded that for the curb lane option you have bike lane at the edge of curb, so its curb, bike lane, streetcar lane and another through lane that would be just for vehicles. Marc continued saying when the bike approaches the platform, the bike lane would be pinched by the platform spacing, so it has to be run behind. Marc noted that with the through lane operation, the bike lane stays where it is and the platform moves out to the parking. Marc continued saying the difference from today is that the bike is on the driver's side as opposed to the passenger side, and you could flip it but we want to keep the bikes to the right of the track.

Steve Tyree said he is concerned about having to be behind the streetcar in one lane because who wants to be behind a bus every time it stops. Steve continued to say if you have several blocks where you have to stop block after block behind the streetcar that people will stop driving downtown. Nancy Hormann noted that the people that drive through downtown do not help as much as people coming to downtown; let them go up Ash if they need to drive fast. Steve noted that the first experience will probably be in a car, and it's going to be slow. Charles Huellmantel noted that it does that to give you more time to see the businesses and then you don't drive through it again.

Mike Wasko asked if we choose the through lane option on Mill Ave downtown, and with the platform out from under the tree canopy and the sun coming from the west, you will need to look hard at some kind of sun shade at the platform. Nancy Hormann noted that the tall buildings provide shade within downtown. Charles Huellmantel suggested that each stop needs to be looked at individually, to avoid the clutter, and if we don't provide shade or the way for people to find the streetcar stops that will be a problem.

Marc Soronson noted that we have lots of good comments on the stops, but not so much about the track location. Marc said that DTC made it clear about the parking issue. Marc continued saying maybe some of that will drive the decision, but he felt that there should be more input on track location. Marc said Charles made clear his opinion on making the sidewalks wider; but track at the curb lane will never do that, track at the shared through lane will be an opportunity to do that, track in the shared through lane allows parking, track in the curb lane will lose parking. Marc said how we deal with bikes is relevant, but it should not drive the decision.

Steve Tyree said he would encourage the City Council and the business owners to have a conversation about whether they want to minimize automobiles driving downtown, and the one lane shared with the streetcar is going to affect that.

Marc Soronson said that METRO will take all these comments and make a recommendation at next month's meeting. Ben Limmer noted that one thing that METRO has been done in the past is a poll to take the temperature of the group.

Paul Kent noted that he likes the option that down the road you could expend the sidewalk, but however if you imagine it all down Mill it will place bikes through all the new sidewalk additions. Paul said, so I would like to see if there is some better option for the bike lane on the shared through lane running rather than on the inside. Chairperson Ellis noted that the CWG is not deciding that now because the City Council could choose to put it in their budget, we are talking five to six years out as City Council has not done the capital budget for that yet. Chairperson Ellis said Council is meeting monthly in a strategy session to discuss what downtown will look like in the future. She continued saying if this group felt strongly about widening the sidewalks or strongly for on-street parking then that recommendation can go with part of what the downtown will look like. Chairperson Ellis continued that Council's discussion is more than just the streetcar, like what kind of street trees are in downtown, what signage should look like and is downtown development different than the rest of the city. We are talking about these already, and the streetcar is going to be a major piece of it, to make sure those discussions go hand in hand.

Lisa Roach asked if there is traffic data with the shared through lane. Marc Soronson noted that there was a little better traffic movement with the curb lane operation, but not much. Lisa asked what about drivers avoiding Mill Avenue and diverting to Rural or Ash. Marc replied that he could get that information.

Charles Lee suggested that you should try (on Mill) to get from University to Rio Salado Parkway without bike lanes, and that way businesses can move out more. Paul Kent noted that he rides his bike downtown, and if traffic is slow enough we do not need a bike lane and the bike lane makes it messy and creates the ramp situation. Chairperson Ellis asked if there was data on how many people use bikes on Mill Avenue. Marc Soronson replied yes we have both bike and pedestrian counts. Marc said this is not the first time we have heard a comment about removing bike lanes. Charles Huellmantel asked if it was possible to look at alternatives immediately adjacent to Mill Avenue. Marc reminded the group that the problem is only in the northbound direction, not the southbound direction on Mill.

Chairperson Ellis noted that the group probably still needs to discuss more on aspects of this, especially so that you feel comfortable on the stop locations.

Agenda Item 6 – Wrap-up and Closing

Chairperson Ellis explained that next month the stop location and track configuration recommendations will come back to the CWG along with the electrical substation location options, urban design guidelines update, vehicle overview and the art program overview. Chairperson Ellis reminded everyone that the next meeting will be held on June 27 which is the fourth Monday of the month starting at 5PM.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM

Tempe Streetcar Community Working Group
May 23, 2011

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